

Melancon [Requested](#) Fisheries Disaster Declaration that Led the Way for Funding
September 17, 2010

WASHINGTON D.C. – Today, U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon welcomed the announcement that \$26 million in federal disaster relief money will be awarded to help fisheries and fishing communities along the Gulf recover from the BP oil disaster. U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke announced the investment today.

Congressman Melancon began working to secure federal assistance for Louisiana's seafood industry shortly after the Deepwater Horizon explosion in April, when [he sent a letter to Commerce Secretary Locke](#) and the head of NOAA's Fisheries Service warning that the oil intrusion would likely damage the fragile habitats on which Louisiana's fishermen, oystermen, and shrimpers depend. Congressman Melancon voted for the funding announced today when he supported the [Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2010](#) in July.

"Louisiana fishermen have been vigilant about only harvesting seafood from clean, oil-free waters, and the seafood that makes it to market has passed multiple safety inspections," said Rep. Melancon. **"But the BP oil disaster has nonetheless created unfounded fears among consumers, and our fishermen are suffering as a result.**

"I began calling for federal funding to help our Louisiana fishermen shortly after the oil leak began in April. The investment announced today is a good first step in rebuilding our Gulf seafood industry back to what it was before the disaster, and preserving a way of life that has been part of south Louisiana culture for centuries."

Commerce Secretary Locke stated that the funding will be used to develop a strategic marketing plan for Gulf Coast fisheries, to fund a health and safety assurance program for Gulf Coast seafood, to expand stock assessments for Gulf fish species, and for a study by the National Academies of Sciences on the long-term effects of the oil spill on the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov> for more information about today's announcement.

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